

Highland Park Strings

36th Season | 2014-2015 | Francesco Milioto, Conductor



Photo by Marc Hauser



Local Stars - World Class Talent

Free Community Concerts

Local Stars - World Class Talent

Our 36th Season Four Community Concerts Sundays at 3 pm

As we begin our 36th season, it is difficult to believe that so many years of joyous music making have passed since the Strings began in 1979 as a performance medium for accomplished chamber musicians and to provide musical enrichment for an appreciative family audience. Each year, initially under the baton of Francis Akos and now under the leadership of Francesco Milloto, the Strings have presented an array of world-class artists and an ever-increasing exploration of the repertoire of classical music—over 350 pieces for string, chamber and full orchestra. That these programs are provided free to the public makes the Strings unique among community orchestras and is made possible primarily through sponsorship of the Park District of Highland Park, YEA! Highland Park, the annual benefit, and corporate and individual contributions.

This season we are presenting music spanning three centuries—from Mozart to Martinu—with six soloists—all with local connections. The North Shore does indeed "have talent"! Our opening concert in October features the acclaimed pianist and Highland Park resident, Susan Merdinger. She will perform Robert Schumann's only piano concerto written for his beloved wife, Clara. The Strings will play the Symphony No. 6 of Beethoven, the "Pastoral". Our December concert is for strings only and stars Highland Park's very own—The Lincoln Trio—the members of which, Desiree Ruhstrat and David Cunliffe live in Highland Park and Marta Aznavoorian resides in Glencoe. Called "one of the hottest young trios in the business" the members of the Trio will perform the Suite for Violin, Cello and Strings by Kurt Atterberg and the Concertino for Piano Trio and Strings by Bohuslav Martinu. The Strings will add the Holberg Suite of Grieg and the Serenade by Victor Herbert—making for an eclectic Holiday concert. Starring in our Benefit concert at Ravinia in February will be Gabriel Cabezas, who has fast become one of the most talented young cello players performing today. A Wilmette native, he will play the Concerto for Cello by Edward Elgar, and the orchestra will play the Symphony No. 1 of Brahms often described as "the greatest first symphony ever written". The closing concert in May provides the chance for you to hear the amazing wunderkind and National Walgreens Competition Winner, 13 year old Masha Lakisova. A resident of Vernon Hills, Masha will perform the Concerto in G Minor by Bruch. The concert will also include three of the delightful Hungarian Dances by Brahms and the masterful last symphony of Mozart, No. 41, the "Jupiter".

We look forward to your continued support. On behalf of the Strings, I am deeply grateful.



Lawrence Block
Founder and General Manager



"To have this group playing classical music with such seriousness and offering free concerts to the community becomes more and more amazing every year. It is a tribute to the sponsorship of the Park District of Highland Park and the donors who turn out for the annual benefit concert. To say nothing of the determination of Larry Block, founder and co-principal cello."

— Dorothy Andries, Pioneer Press

Call 847.831.3622

Visit hpstrings.org



Francesco Milioto, Conductor



This season marks Mr. Milioto's eighth as Conductor of the Highland Park Strings. Since coming to Chicago from Canada a dozen years ago, he has become an integral member of the city's musical scene. In addition to the Strings, he leads the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra, the New Millennium Orchestra and Access Contemporary Music. Following his successful work on "La Traviata" last season, Mr. Milioto returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago as a cover conductor for productions of Strauss' "Capriccio" and Puccini's "Tosca". The Skokie Valley season will feature actors, young artists and a celebration of Jewish music. The cutting-edge New Millennium Orchestra will push the envelope with three concerts highlighting some of the most challenging chamber orchestra music. and a self produced opera.

This season also marks Mr. Milioto's eighth with Access Contemporary Music where plans include a Composer ALIVE project and a return to the Music Box Theater for the popular Sound of Silent Film Festival. Please visit francescomilioto.com for more information about Maestro Milioto.



... Milioto's leadership no doubt helped the players navigate the difficulty of the music and gave remarkably equal coverage to the different shades and dramatic aspects of the score."

– Chicago Classical Review

...Milioto presides with verve and bite..."

– John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

"... the idiomatic and seductive conducting of ...Milioto... immerses us in these contrasting musical worlds...Milioto ...made the ...work something of a musical revelation."

– Andrew Patner, *Chicago Sun-Times*



Stephanie Ettelson presents
"The Art of Listening to Today's Concert"
prior to each program at 2 pm.

October 26

Schumann and Beethoven

3 pm ~ Free Admission ~ Highland Park High School ~ 433 Vine Avenue
Sponsored by First Bank of Highland Park

SCHUMANN

Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54
Susan Merdinger, Piano

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 ("Pastoral")



Performances by Steinway Artist, Susan Merdinger, have been hailed as "tender and impassioned" by the Glasgow Herald and Fanfare Magazine has likened her playing to that of the legendary pianists Leonard Bernstein and Annie Fisher. Among her many honors, Merdinger is a winner of the Bradshaw and Buono International Piano Competition, the Artists International Young Musicians Competition and the Dewar's Young Artist Award. Susan has been a frequent Visiting Artist of the Chicago Symphony

Orchestra Chamber Music Series and has been a featured soloist with numerous orchestras including the Chicago Philharmonic, Yonkers Symphony, the Northwest Chicago Symphony and the Lake Forest Civic Orchestra. Merdinger's solo, chamber music and concerto performances have been broadcast on radio and television and she has appeared in concert halls throughout the USA, Europe and Canada. A graduate of Yale University, Susan resides in Highland Park with her husband Steven Greene and , together with their three children , all aspiring musicians, they perform as the The Five Greenes. Susan will perform Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto in A Minor, written for his wife Clara, who gave the first performance in 1845. The Strings will play the Symphony No. 6 of Beethoven, the glorious "Pastoral".



"Schumann playing of eloquent expression and exquisite beauty"

– Fanfare Magazine

"...interpretation that showed intelligence and originality...An afternoon of brilliant piano playing."

– Richard Karpen, *World Art and Craft Magazine*

December 7

Lincoln Trio With Strings Attached

3 pm - Free Admission - Highland Park High School - 433 Vine Avenue

GRIEG

Holberg Suite, Op. 40

ATTERBERG

Suite for Violin, Cello and Strings, Op. 19, No. 1
Desiree Ruhstrat, Violin, David Cunliffe, Cello

HERBERT

Serenade for Strings

MARTINU

Concertino for Piano Trio and Strings
Lincoln Trio



Formed in 2003, the Lincoln Trio takes its name from their home, the Land of Lincoln. Bringing together performing experience spanning the globe, each member is an artist of international renown. Violinist Desiree Ruhstrat has performed throughout the US (including an appearance at the White House) and in Europe, cellist David Cunliffe has performed with the BBC and Royal Scottish Orchestras and pianist Marta Aznavoorian has appeared with the Chicago Symphony. The

Trio has performed throughout the United States including appearances at Carnegie's Weill Hall, Ravinia Festival and in Springfield, Illinois where the Trio was chosen to celebrate the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial celebration with President Barack Obama. Internationally, the Trio has performed in Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam and most recently a 5 city tour of Colombia. The Trio has an extensive discography and its 2013 release of "Annelies" based on the Dairy of Anne Frank was nominated for a Grammy Award. Champions of new and rarely performed music, the Trio will play the Concertino for Trio and Strings by Martinu and Desiree and David will add the Suite for Violin, Cello and Strings by Norwegian Kurt Atterberg. The Strings will be heard in the Holberg Suite by Grieg and the delightful Serenade for Strings by Victor Herbert, best known for his many operettas produced on Broadway.



...one of the hottest young trios in the business."

- Fanfare Magazine

February 8 Annual Benefit Elgar and Brahms

Sponsored by YEA! Highland Park

3 pm ~ \$40 General Admission ~ Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia

For tickets, call 847.831.3622.

ELGAR

Concerto for Cello in E Minor, Op. 85

Gabriel Cabezas, Cello

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 68



The Strings' Annual Benefit concert in the intimate and acoustically perfect Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia is the highlight of the season. Appearing as soloist is Gabriel Cabezas, who has fast become one of the most talented young cello players performing today. Born in 1992, he made his world debut with the Cleveland Orchestra when he was only 15 years old. Since then he has performed as soloist with the Chicago Symphony, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Houston

Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic and, this past summer, the Grant Park Orchestra. Cabezas took to music early and attended New Trier High School. While a student at the Music Institute of Chicago, Cabezas won the CSO's Youth Auditions in 2008 and was one of the first guests on the WFMT weekly "Introductions" program. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music his teachers and mentors include Carter Brey and Yo-Yo Ma. Gabriel will perform the Concerto in E Minor by Edward Elgar. Adding to the festivities of the Gala Benefit, the Strings will play the magnificent Symphony No. 1 of Brahms, music of surpassing creative power, eloquence and originality".



"...an intense player who connects to the music naturally without artifice, and brings a singing line to the cello"

– The Oregonian

"The greatly gifted young cellist...combined polished execution with a burnished warmth of tone...and subtlety of phrasing...There was real maturity in the cellist's playing..."

– John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

Bonus for Major Contributors

Show how important Strings concerts are to you and the community by making a donation of \$100 or more. You will receive a minimum of two tickets, preferred seating, listing in the Program Book and free tickets to a Donor Appreciation Chamber Music Concert at 3pm on April 5 at the Highland Park Community House.

May 17

Fiddle Phenom Plays Bruch

3 pm ~ Free Admission ~ Highland Park High School ~ 433 Vine Avenue
Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood

BRAHMS

Hungarian Dances Nos. 1,3,10

BRUCH

Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26

Masha Lakisova, Violin

MOZART

Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 ("Jupiter")



Masha Lakisova, age 13, began her musical journey with piano at age four, followed by violin about a year later. Today, she is home-schooled in Vernon Hills and a student of internationally renowned violin teachers, Drew Lecher and Grigory Kalinovsky. A winner of the Illinois Music Association Competition and the National Walgreens Competition, Masha became the youngest finalist of the 7th International Louis Spohr Competition for Young Violinists.

She has appeared in Carnegie Hall, the Chicago Cultural Center, Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia and Pick Staiger Hall at Northwestern. She has also been a featured soloist with the North Shore Symphony Orchestra, Midwest Young Artists Youth Orchestras and the Lake Forest Symphony Orchestra. Masha will perform the Concerto No. 1 in G Minor by Max Bruch, one of a handful of works by which the composer is remembered. The Strings will add three of the Hungarian Dances by Brahms and the masterful last symphony of Mozart, No. 41, the "Jupiter".



"American Masha Lakisova, in the Mendelssohn Concerto, stood out for her sensitive musicianship and communication"

– Strad Magazine

"As for the Brahms (Symphony No. 4), the Strings performed it with vigor and style, delivering what might be called the 'downtown sound' associated with such repertoire"

– Dorothy Andries, *Pioneer Press*



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October 26 – Schumann and Beethoven • Highland Park High School
December 7 – Lincoln Trio With Strings Attached • Highland Park High School
February 8 (Benefit) – Elgar and Brahms • Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia
May 17 – Fiddle Phenom Plays Bruch • Highland Park High School

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Free admission sponsored by the Park District of Highland Park